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The Facts About Foster Kids

- GROWING NUMBERS** The need for foster care is growing dramatically:
- In the last decade, the number of Idaho children placed in foster care has more than tripled from 747 in state fiscal year 1993 to 2,382 in 2003.
 - Nationwide, the number of children in foster care reached 565,000 in 2001, which is more than twice as many as in 1987 (280,000). Each year, nearly 300,000 U.S. children enter foster care.
- AGES** Foster children range in age from infants to 18 years old (in some instances, foster children can remain in care until age 21):
- The average age of Idaho foster children is about 9.5 years.
 - Nationwide, the average age is 10.1 years. Of U.S. foster children, 4 percent are under 1 year old, 25 percent are ages 1-5, 26 percent are ages 6-10, 28 percent are ages 11-15, 16 percent are ages 16-18, and 2 percent are 19 or older.
- GENDER** The ratio of boys to girls in foster care is roughly half and half:
- In Idaho, 52 percent of foster children are boys and 48 percent are girls.
 - Likewise, 52 percent of U.S. foster children are boys and 48 percent are girls.
- ETHNICITY**
- In Idaho, white children constitute 77 percent of the foster care population, Hispanic children represent 12 percent, Alaskan Native/American Indian children account for 9 percent, and black children make up the remaining 2 percent; children of Asian/Pacific Islander descent and children whose ethnicity was unable to be determined each represented less than 1 percent.
 - Nationwide, black children make up 39 percent of the foster care population, followed by white children at 34 percent, Hispanic children at 17 percent, Native American/Alaskan Native children at 2 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islander at 1 percent; the ethnicity of 7 percent of U.S. foster children is unknown.
- SIBLINGS** Keeping siblings together can be problematic. While the majority of children in out-of-home care nationwide have siblings, agencies succeed in keeping siblings together as little as 25 percent of the time.

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in foster family homes headed by a blood relative, 10 percent are placed in institutions,
8 percent are placed in group homes, 4 percent of foster children are placed in pre-adoptive
homes, 3 percent are placed in trial home visits, and 1 percent are runaways

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For more information, please contact Mickey Harmer at (208) 334-5695.